



3330 N. Causeway Blvd., Metairie, LA 70002 Ph: 504/831-1565
Fax: 504/831-2621 mail@jeffersondollarsforscholars.org

Chairman Kevin Martin
Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate
Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Robert McDowell
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein
Federal Communications Commission
The Portals
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

October 23, 2006

RE: Support BellSouth / AT&T Merger, WC Docket No. 06-74

Dear Commissioners:

The merger of AT&T and BellSouth will deliver new and innovative broadband technologies to improve Louisiana's, and our nation's educational capabilities. Therefore, I urge you to approve the merger promptly. As Executive Director of **Jefferson Dollars for Scholars**, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing educational opportunities to students in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, I strongly believe **that internet access is as inherent an educational tool as a textbook and access to all must be available and affordable.**

For research and communication, distance learning and cutting-edge in-classroom tools, our students and educators are already learning how technology can open new doors. Yet, we cannot create communications technology and its implications for education that are only available to some of the public. In fact this is an opportunity to truly provide lifelong learning for millions. For this reason, the FCC should approve the merger of these two great American communications companies as quickly as possible.

We were pleased to learn recently that AT&T and BellSouth have proposed post-merger commitments, including a promise to bring *affordable* and *universal* broadband coverage to Louisiana's parents and students. Specifically, AT&T and BellSouth have offered:

- A \$10 monthly residential broadband Internet service offering

- A pledge to make available broadband Internet access to *all* residential living units in the AT&T/BellSouth footprint, including rural America and lower income housing units.

This broadband commitment will greatly benefit our educational system by:

- Speeding the deployment of exciting new broadband-based technologies and other promising innovations to our nation's schools and libraries and to students' homes.
- Providing new economic growth and jobs for our young people.
- Enhancing *distance learning* capabilities, such as offering students greater access to advanced placement and other classes, providing new educational tools for students and others with disabilities, and providing new cost-effective learning tools that will enhance America's global competitiveness.

As we continue the rebuilding of our battered region, the advantages of the AT&T/BellSouth merger shall serve as a national example of redevelopment and improvement. Given the positive impact these commitments will bring to our educational system and young people, I urge you to approve the AT&T/BellSouth merger at the earliest possible date.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. The 50,000 families in the public school system we serve eagerly await this action.

Sincerely,

Lisa Conescu
Executive Director, Jefferson Dollars for Scholars

cc: Marlene Dortch, Commission Secretary